

I'm Métis!



A colouring & activity book for everyone!



Who are the Métis?



We are a people of both
North American Aboriginal
and European ancestry.

The Constitution Act, 1982,
recognizes us as one of Canada's
founding aboriginal peoples.



What is our history?

Early European traders and explorers in North America frequently married local women. The children of these unions often grew up to create their own unique communities. In Canada, Métis families and communities were identifiable as early as the 1600's. This book tells the story of the Métis of the prairies.

Many Métis families followed the fur trade to the Red River area, where they became renowned buffalo-hunters. A large community coalesced, in which Métis people maintained their traditional culture.

In 1869, the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned its claim to the Red River area, and the Red River Métis established a provisional government.

Unfortunately, Métis claims for a stable land-base and fair treatment were not honoured by the government of Canada. As a result, many Métis were forced to move west and become wanderers without a homeland.

Marginalized by the dominant culture, our people have found strength and support in the community of our families, and in our Métis history and traditions. Our traditions are the result of our combined ancestral cultures, modified by our people's experience as voyageurs and buffalo-hunters. *Métis* is from a French word meaning "mixed". The sign of infinity is represented on the Métis flag, and symbolizes the joining of our two ancestral nations.



I'm Métis!

A Colouring and Activity Book on
Prairie Métis History, Language and Culture

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Nous voyageons

We travel

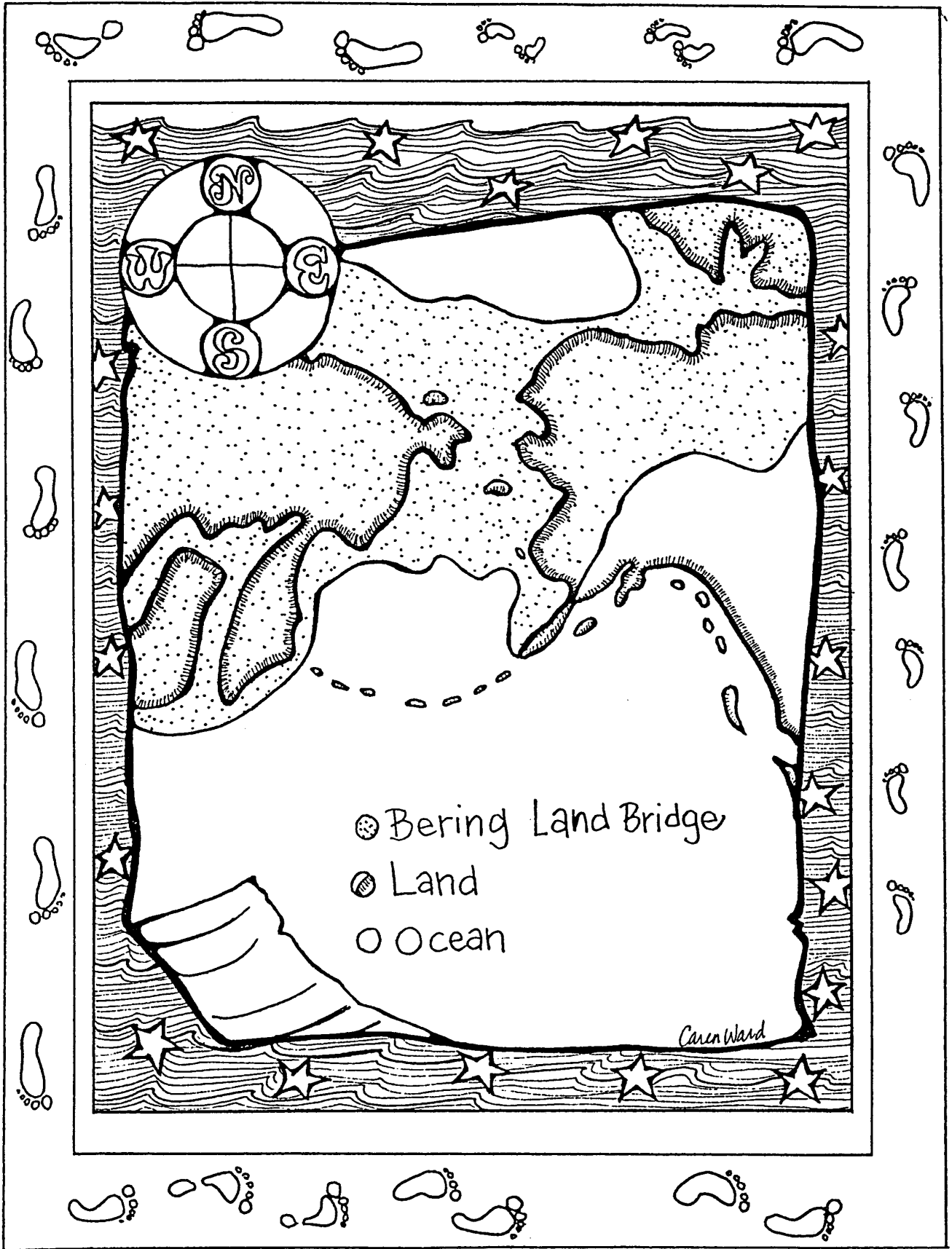
Ni'papamakocininan

Many years ago,

people came to Canada from other lands.

They have been called the "First Peoples".

Anthropological evidence indicates that immigrants to the Americas travelled from Asia both by sea and via a broad land-bridge across what is now the Bering Straits. The bulk of anatomical, genetic and linguistic evidence suggests that there was more than one major wave of immigration from Asia, beginning as early as 30,000 years ago. There are also indications that there may have been a prehistoric migration from Europe. It was the descendants of these migrations who became the hunters and gatherers of the North American Plains, and who developed the farming and trading centres of the Eastern Woodlands.



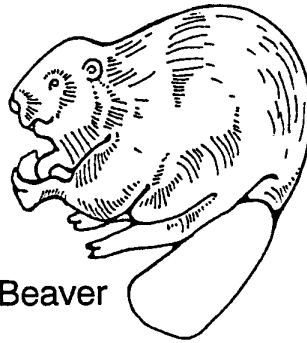
- Bering Land Bridge
- Land
- Ocean

Caren Ward

Un castor

Beaver

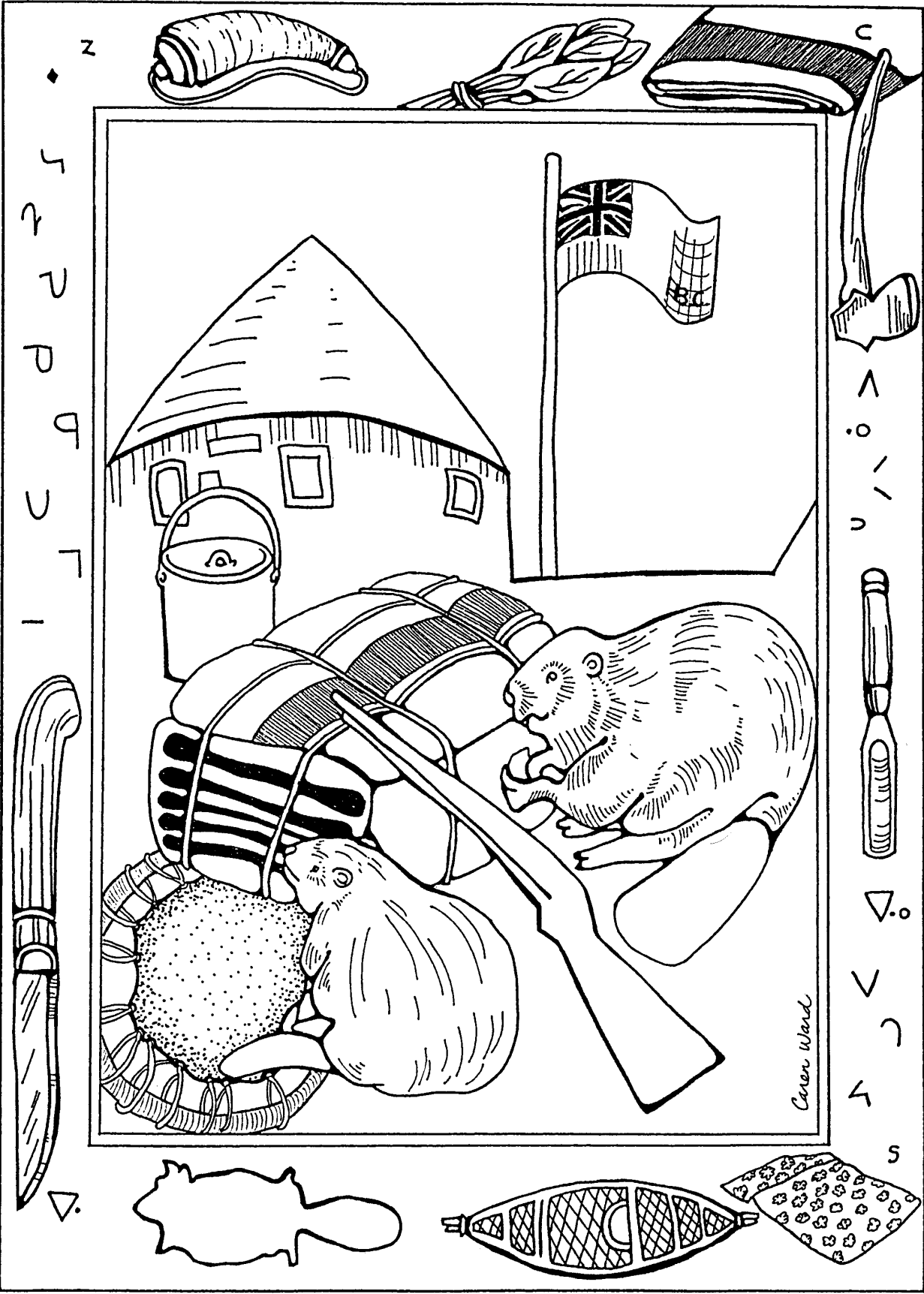
Amisk



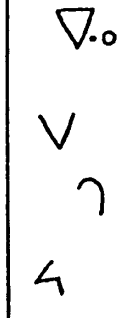
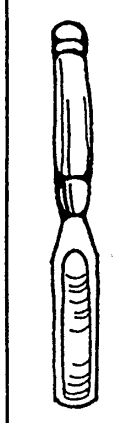
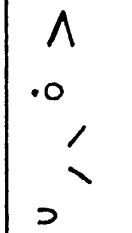
Later, people came from Europe.

They traded tools and supplies for furs.

The earliest historic information indicates that Northern Europeans first landed on the shores of this continent around 1000 years ago, when Vikings explored the East Coast. Although these early explorers were followed by Basque fishermen and whalers, the most extensive exploration of North America by Europeans was undertaken in the 18th century by the early fur traders, most of whom came from Scotland and Brittany.



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Caren Ward

Métis Flag



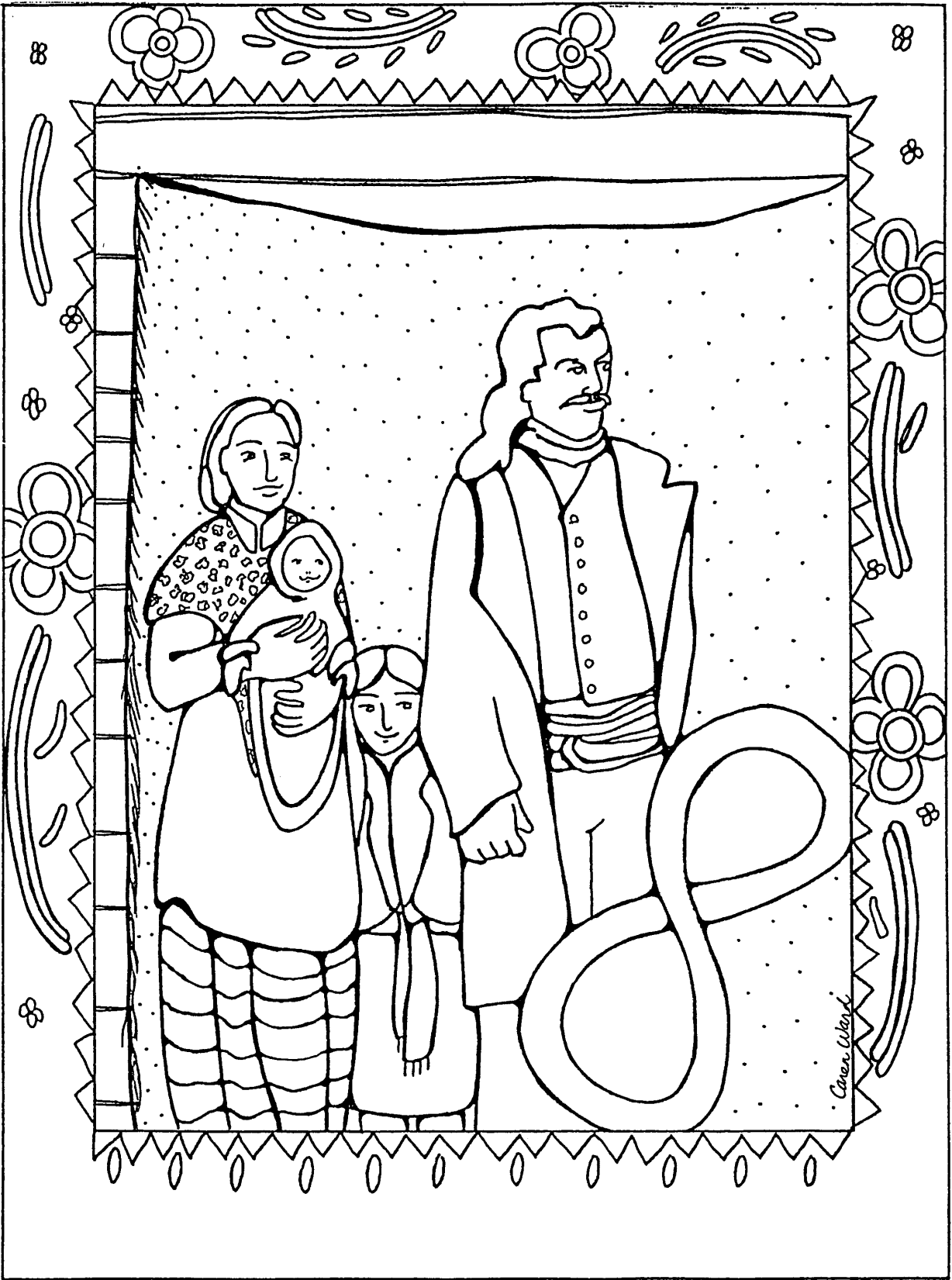
Le Drapeau Métis

Métis people are the children of these two races. We call ourselves “the New Nation”.

The first Métis people lived near the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes. They were the children of French traders and Anishnabec or Iroquois women. Later, English traders from the Hudson's Bay area married Cree women, which produced a community of “half-breeds”. In the early 19th century, these two communities came together in the Red River area and coalesced into a unique Aboriginal community.

A third group of Metis originated in the Athapaskan area, where both French and English traders courted local women. The marriages that took place were “in the style of the country” and were not usually recognized as valid by the European establishment.

Our people called themselves *Bois Brûlé* (French for “burned wood”; from an Ojibway term), *Katipaimso otchic* (Cree: “the people who own themselves”), and *otepemisiwak* (Cree: “the free people”). Today, the descendants of these people call themselves “Métis”.



Ma Famille

My Family

Ni Wahkomâkanak



Un Canot

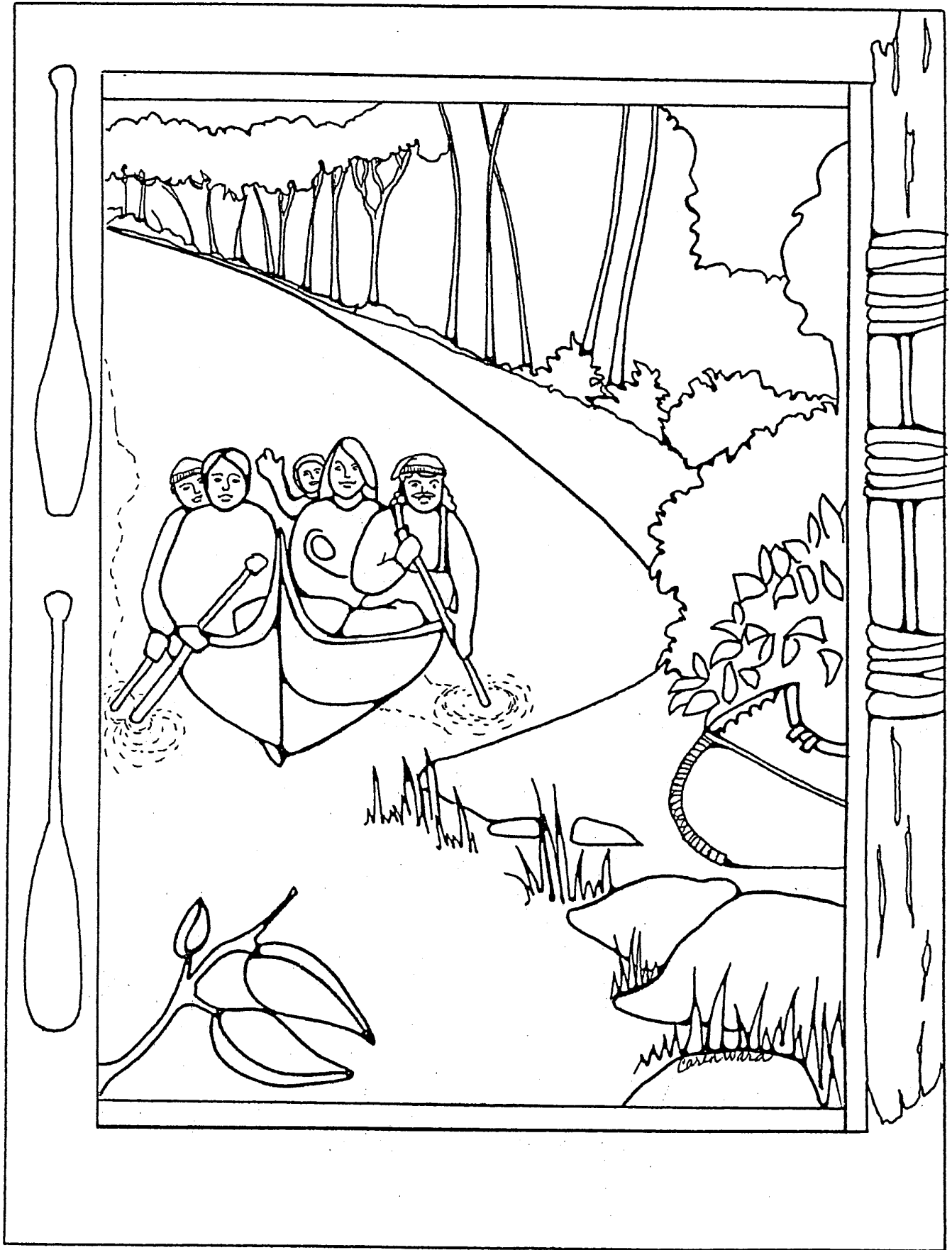
Canoe

Oosi

Our Métis ancestors

travelled throughout the country in canoes,

The only efficient mode of travel through the woodlands of the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes area was by canoe. Canoes were built of birchbark, and used extensively for trading and hunting, and for harvesting wild rice. The Métis used the small, traditional canoes in areas where there were fast rivers that required great maneuverability; they used much larger canoes when paddling the Great Lakes.





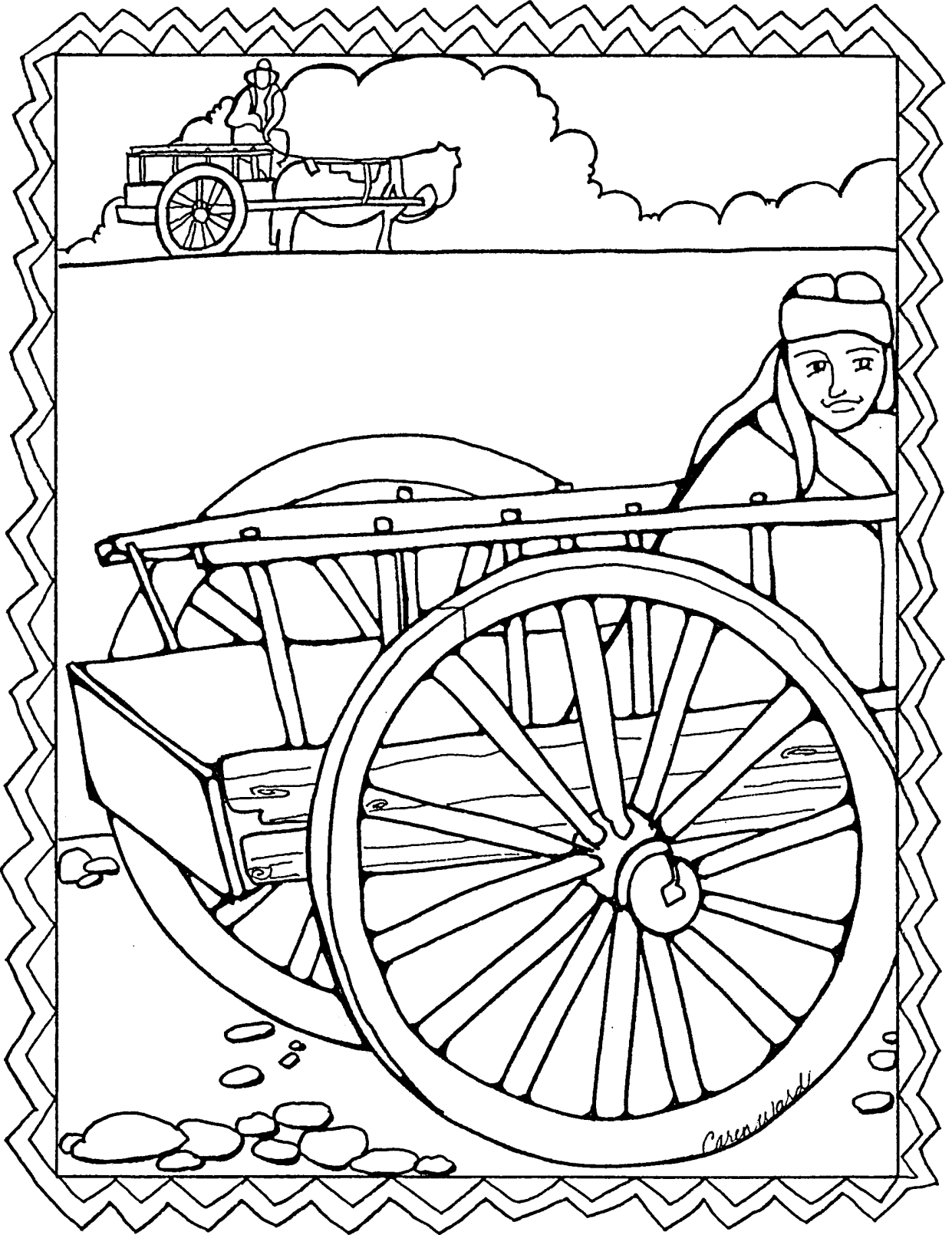
Les Prairies

Prairie

Paskow

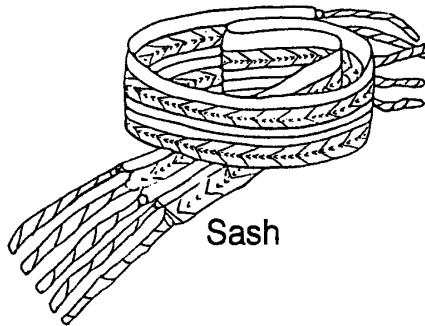
And in Red River carts, which they invented.

The Red River Cart was in many ways similar to wagons used in Europe. However, the Métis cart was unique in two ways: 1) it had oversized, dished wheels, which allowed it to cross the sometimes muddy prairie without getting stuck; and, 2) no lubricant was used on the axle (It was discovered that any grease used would collect dirt and pebbles from the prairie soil. This grit acted like sandpaper, wearing away the wooden axle. Consequently, Red River Carts were known for the loud creaking noise that resulted from the wooden axle rubbing against the wooden cart.) When Métis travellers came to a river, the wheels of the cart were removed and lashed underneath, and the entire cart floated across.



Caren Ward

Une Ceinture Fléchée



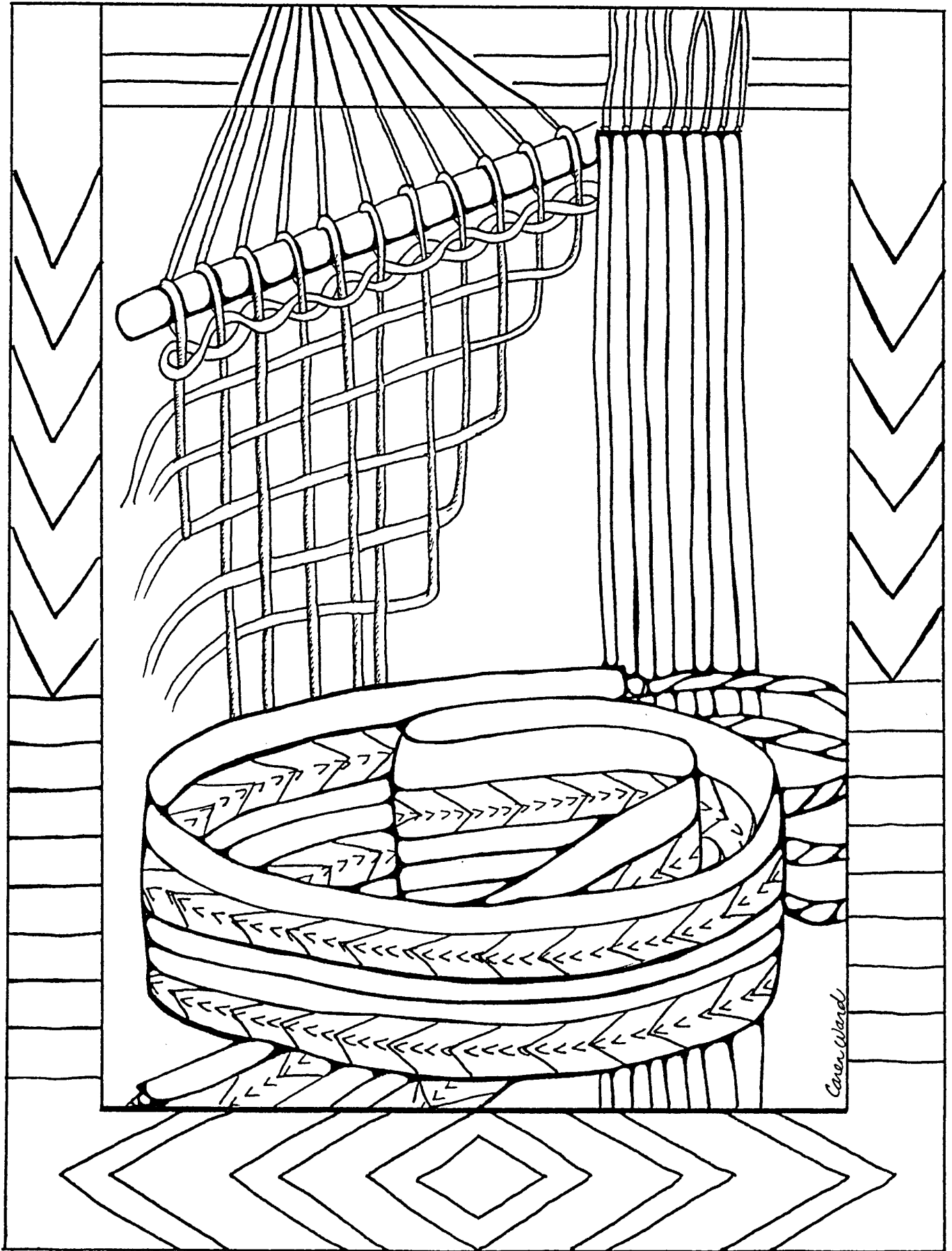
Sash

Waskapisoon

Métis women

made brightly coloured sashes.

The Métis combined the finger-weaving techniques of their mothers' tribes with the wool yarn of their fathers' people, and created useful and decorative sashes. Sashes were used as belts for capotes (coats made from wool blankets). They were also used to carry tools and valuables, by either folding the sash to create a pocket, or by tying valuables onto the long fringes at either end. Sashes could also be used as ropes when necessary. Today, the sash has become a symbol of the Metis people.





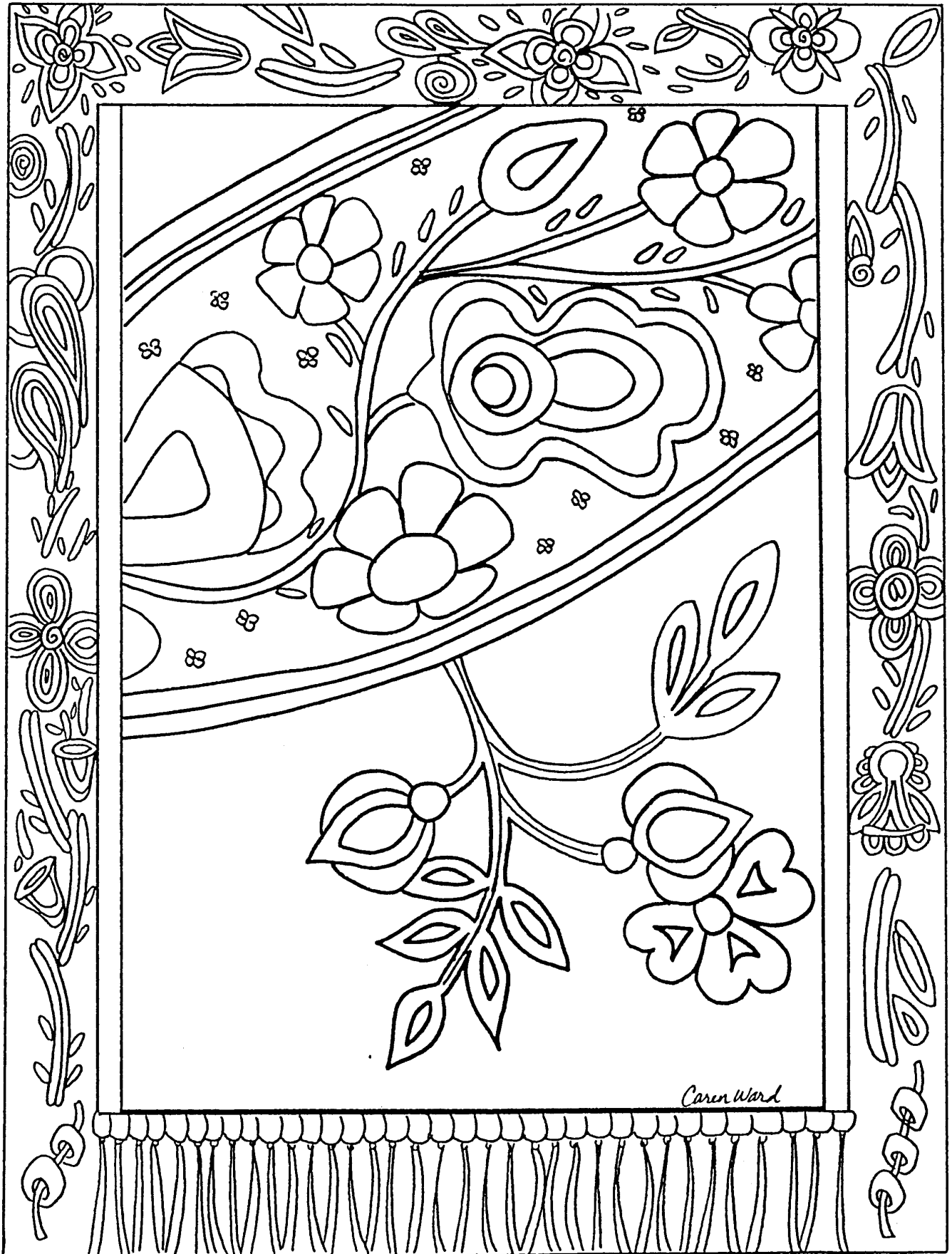
Les Fleurs

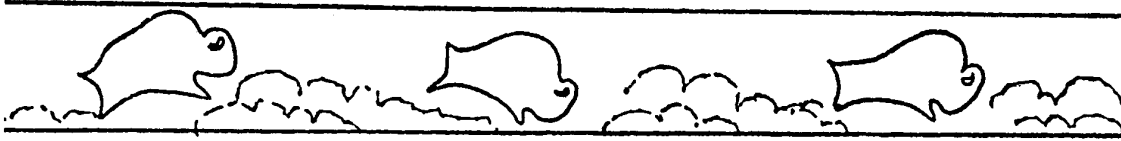
Flowers

Wâpikwanîsa

They also created beautiful beadwork.

The traditional beadwork of the Métis combined European floral patterns with Cree and Ojibway curvilinear designs. Glass trade beads were easier to work with than the porcupine quills that had been used by their mothers' people, and Métis women took pleasure in decorating clothing, tobacco pouches, rifle covers, and other articles. The Métis also used bright ribbons to add colour and beauty to their lives.





Le Beouf

Buffalo

Paskwow Mostos

The Métis on the prairies hunted buffalo.

The men chose a "captain" to lead the buffalo hunt, because it was a dangerous endeavor and would be successful only if the buffalo were not stampeded prematurely. After the hunt, the women and youngsters worked hard to preserve the buffalo meat and hides. Because the Metis were of Anishnabe (Cree-Ojibway) ancestry, they had to be ready to defend themselves from attack by the Sioux (Dakota), their traditional enemies and competitors for the buffalo.



Nous mangeons



We eat



Mîcisowak

They ate a type of bread,

called “bannock”,

and dried buffalo meat called “pemmican”.

The word “pemmican” is from the Cree *pemmi*, meaning fat, and *konn*, meaning meat. Bannock is a type of fried bread which was brought to this continent by the Europeans.

Bannock Recipe:

1 batch = 20 pieces

4 cups flour

5 teaspoons baking powder

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

2 1/4 cups water

Mix dry ingredients.

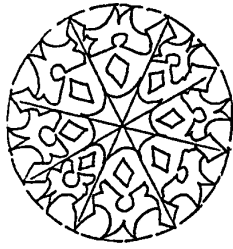
Add water and make a thick paste.

Roll out to 1/2 to 3/4 inches thick,
using flour as necessary to avoid sticking.

Using a coffee cup, cut into biscuits.

Fry, flip, and fry.





La Neige

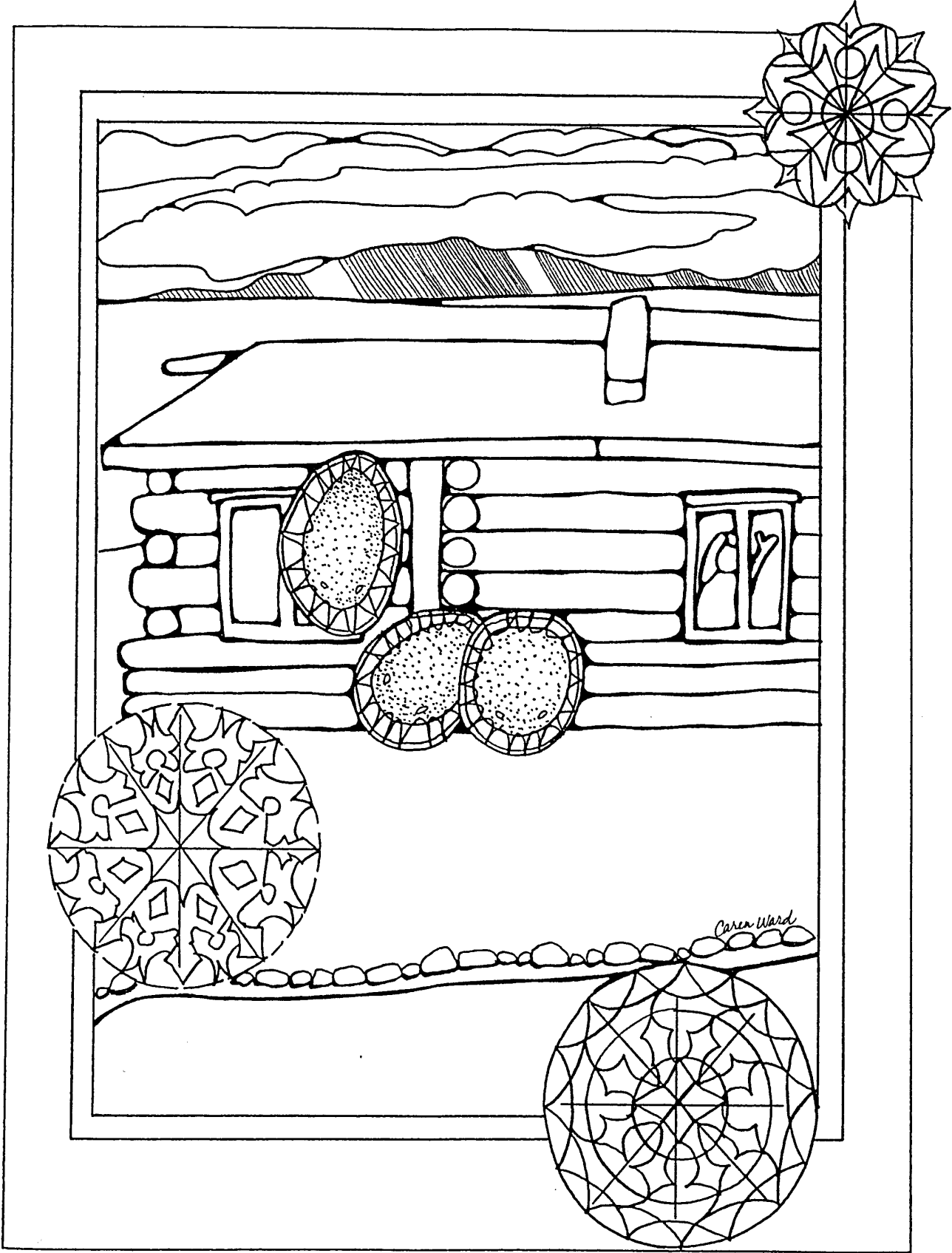
Snow

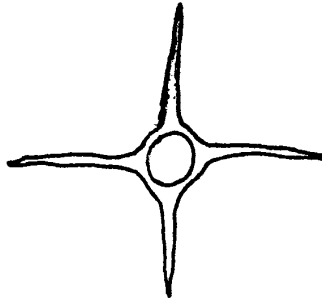
Kôna

In the winter,

they lived in houses on river lots.

Métis people divided their land into long, narrow "river lots". Each lot began at the river, which was not only a source of water for drinking and irrigation, but was the major transportation route. Next to the river was a vegetable garden, next to the garden was the house (usually a small cabin), then an enclosure for livestock, and finally a grazing area and woodlot.





L'été

Summer

Nípin

But during the hunting season,
they lived in tipis.

Twice a year, in the spring and again in the fall, the Métis left their river lots to follow the buffalo. Almost the entire community gathered in a cart brigade and left for the hunt; only the very young and the very old stayed behind. During these hunting trips, which could last weeks, the Métis lived in tipis--conical tents made of buffalo hides held up by poplar poles. The tipis were surprisingly comfortable, and the Red River carts made it easy to move them from place to place.





Je chante

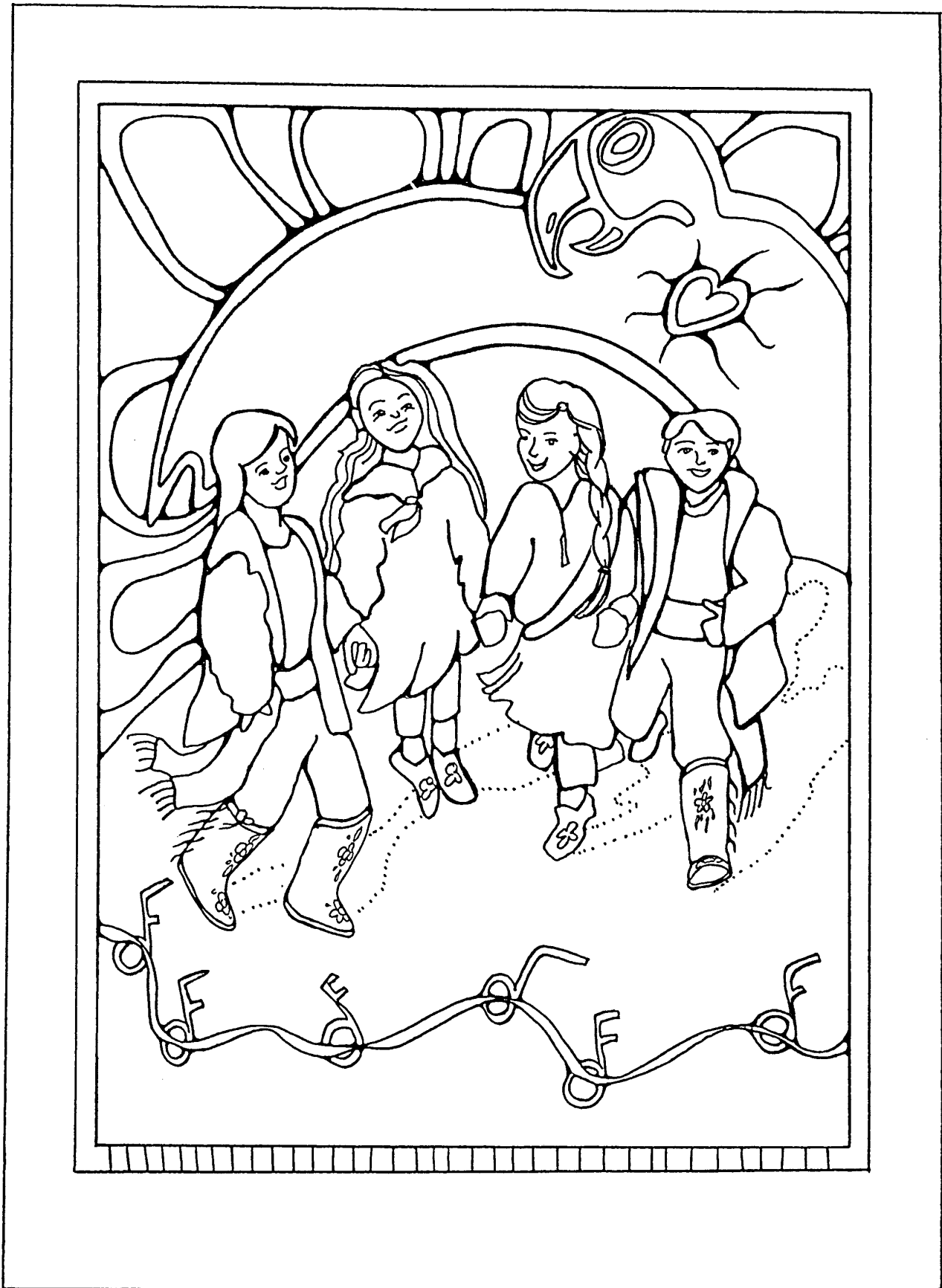
I sing

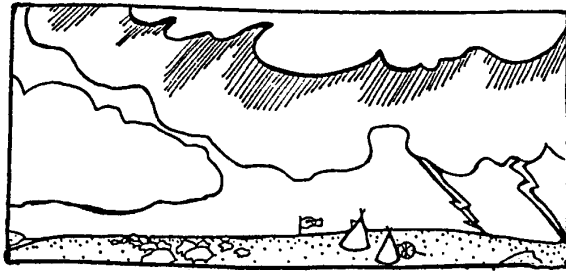
Nikamowin

Wherever our people went,

they found time for music and dancing.

Métis people were, and still are, known for their lively fiddle music. Because they were semi-nomadic, they needed a portable musical instrument; the violin met their needs. The Métis often made their own instruments, and shared traditional tunes at Métis dances. Dancers at these gatherings competed with each other to discover who was the most skilled dancer. A popular dance was the *Red River Jig*, a tune which combines Celtic melodies with Ojibway rhythms.





Il fait orageux

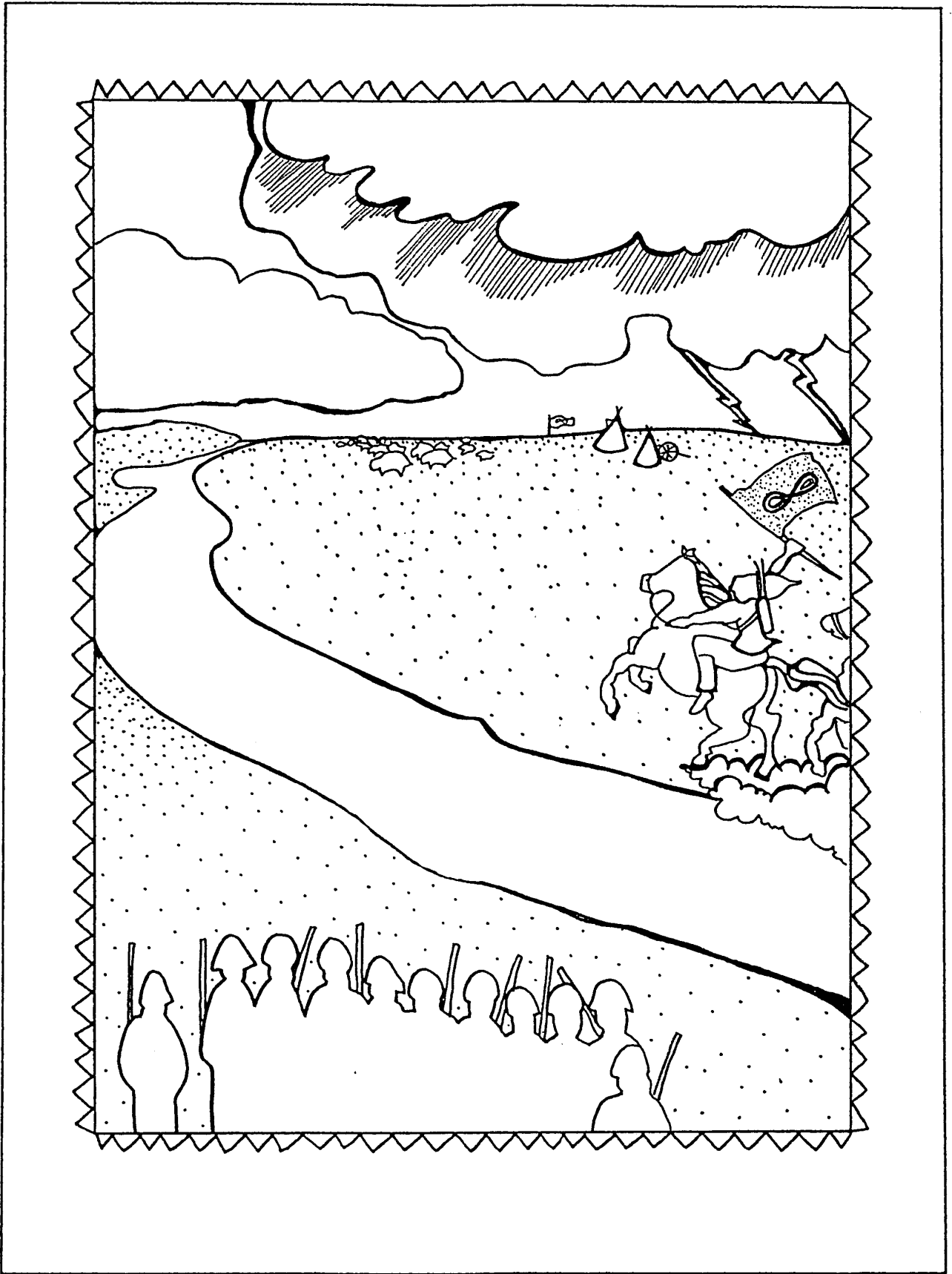
Stormy weather

Mayi kesikaw

Sometimes

we Métis had to fight for our way of life.

In 1816 a Métis force, under the leadership of Cuthbert Grant, won the Battle of Seven Oaks. This was the first time the Métis fought as a united people. In 1869, Louis Riel led a bloodless coup that created the first Manitoba Parliament. Pressure from European settlers forced many Métis to leave their Manitoba homeland and follow the river valleys west. On the South Saskatchewan River in 1885, the Métis were overcome by hunger, cold, and the superior fire-power of Prime Minister John A. MacDonal'd's Canadian Army. Their traditional homeland and way of life were taken from them by force.





Bois Brûlé



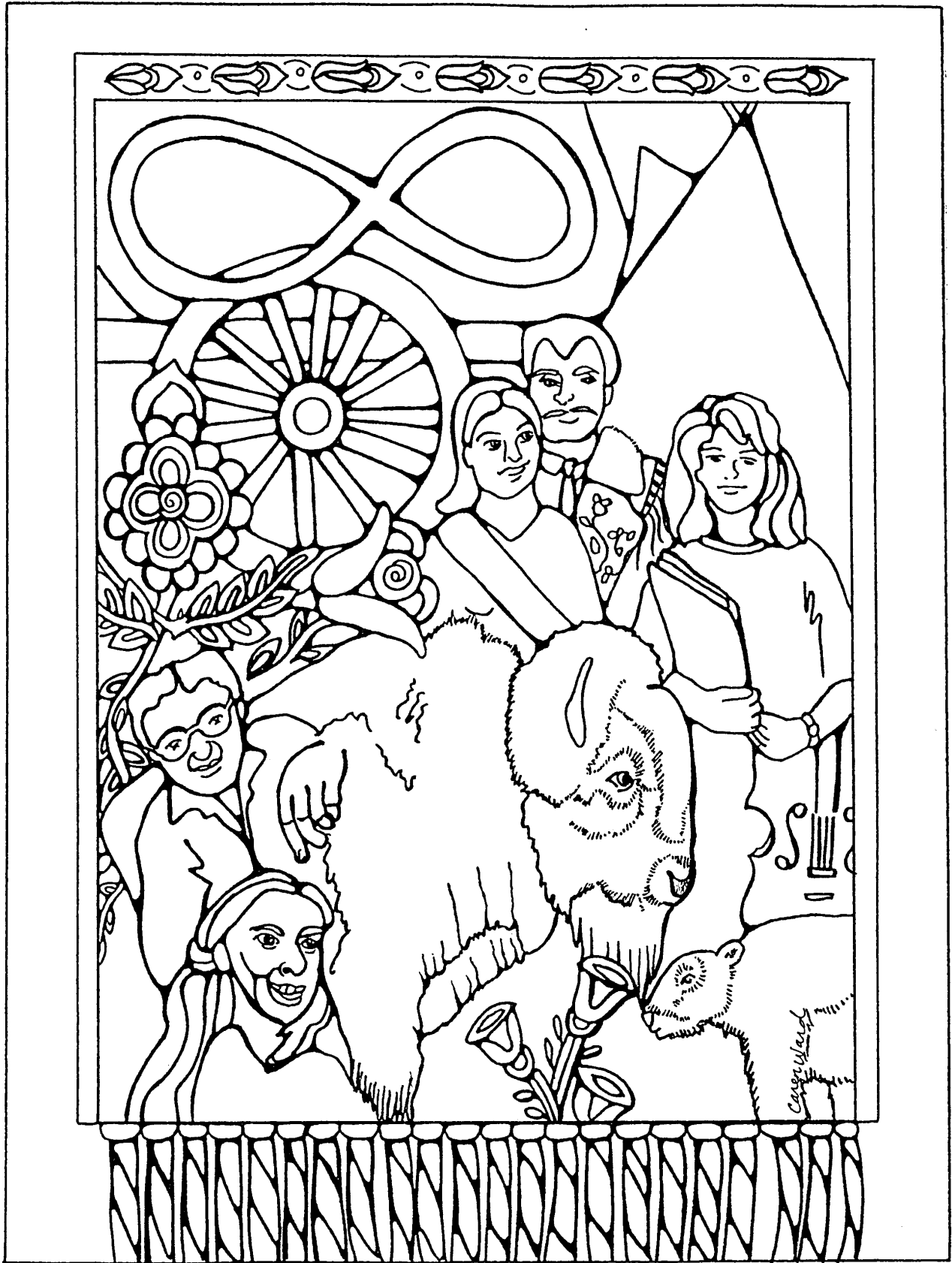
Métis

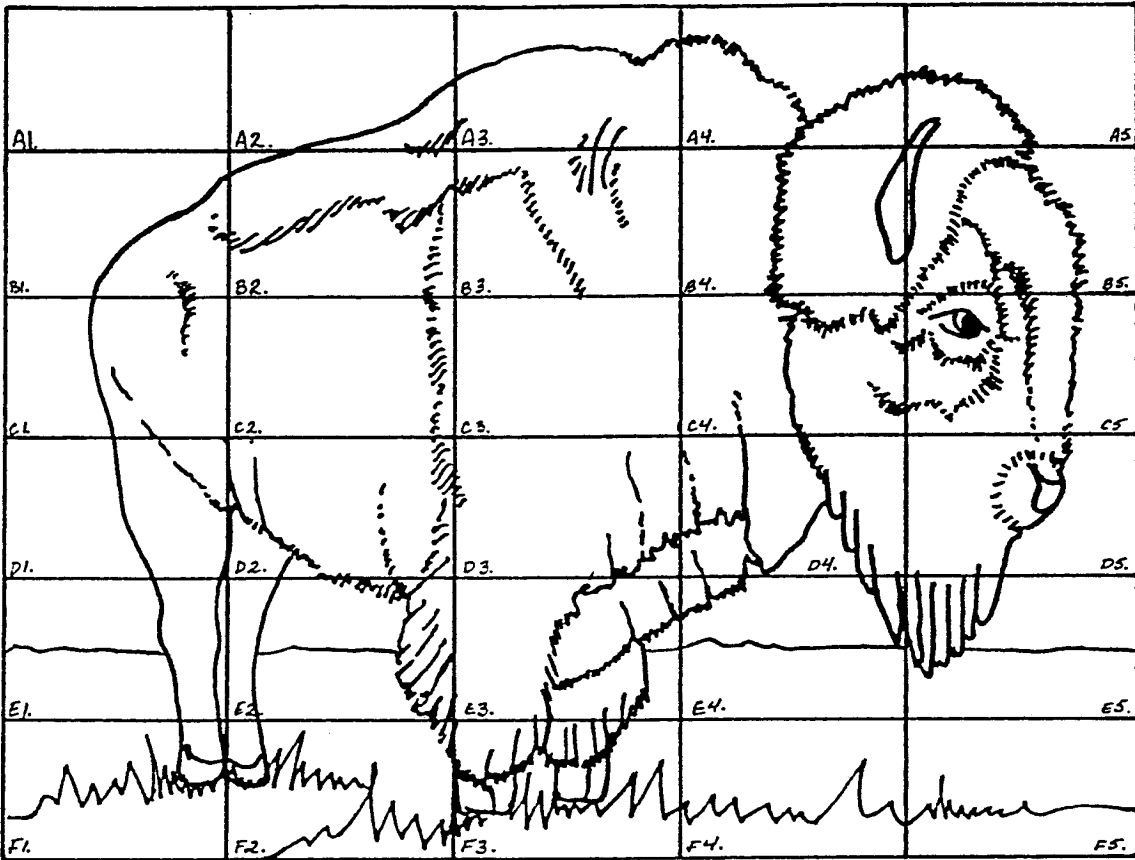


Otepemisiwak

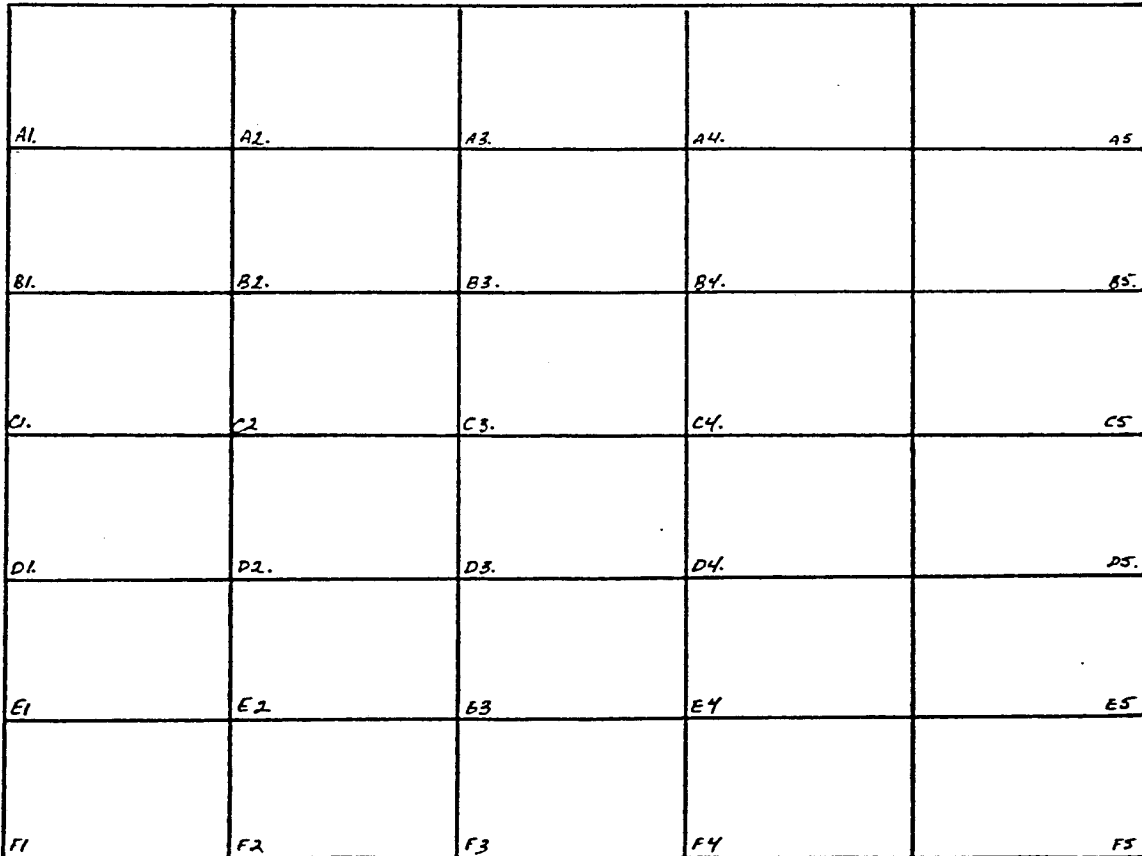
But we survived because we're proud Métis.

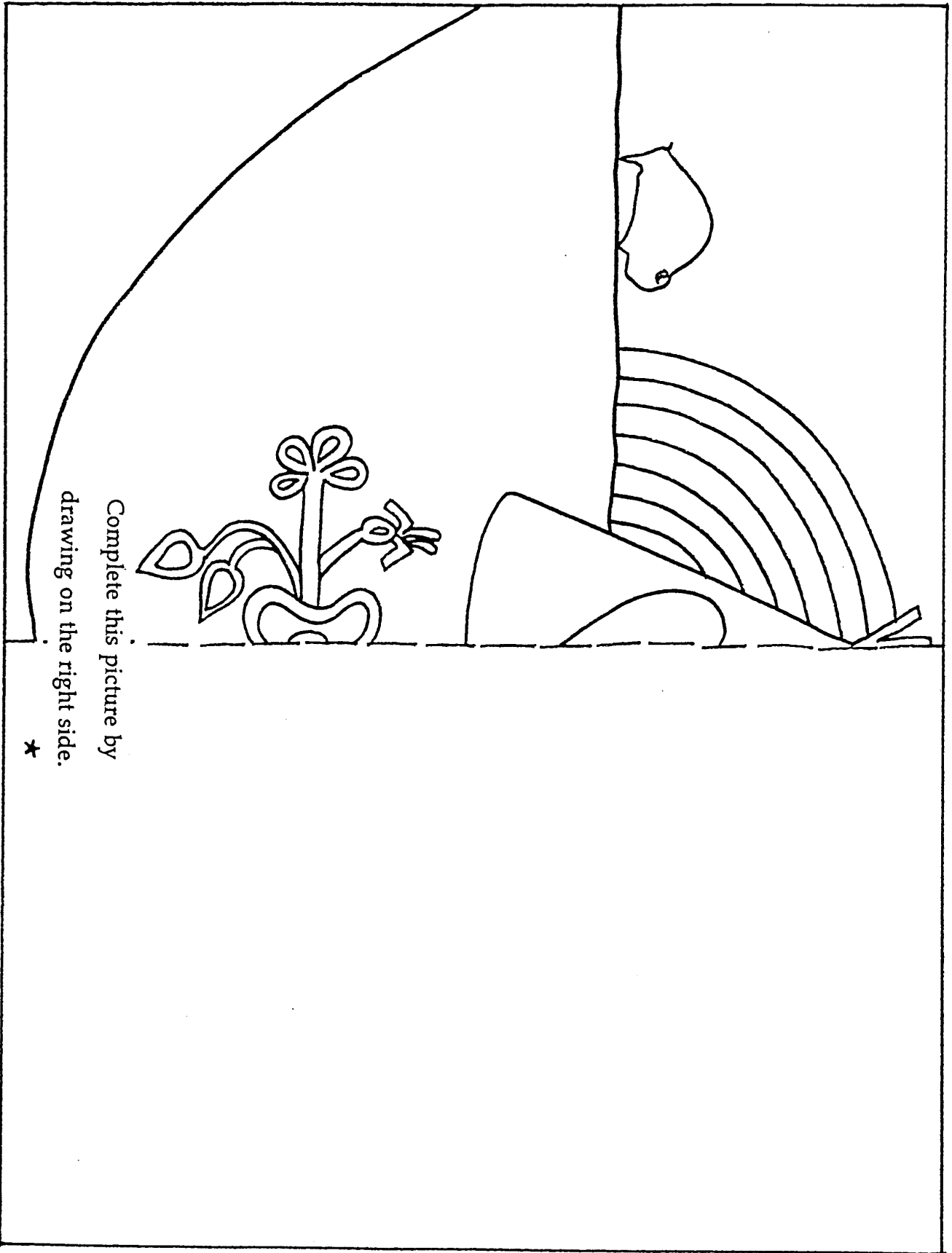
Today, the Métis have been acknowledged as one of Canada's three founding Aboriginal peoples (Canadian Constitution, 1982). Métis people are taking pride in their history, celebrating their culture, and working toward a better future for their children.





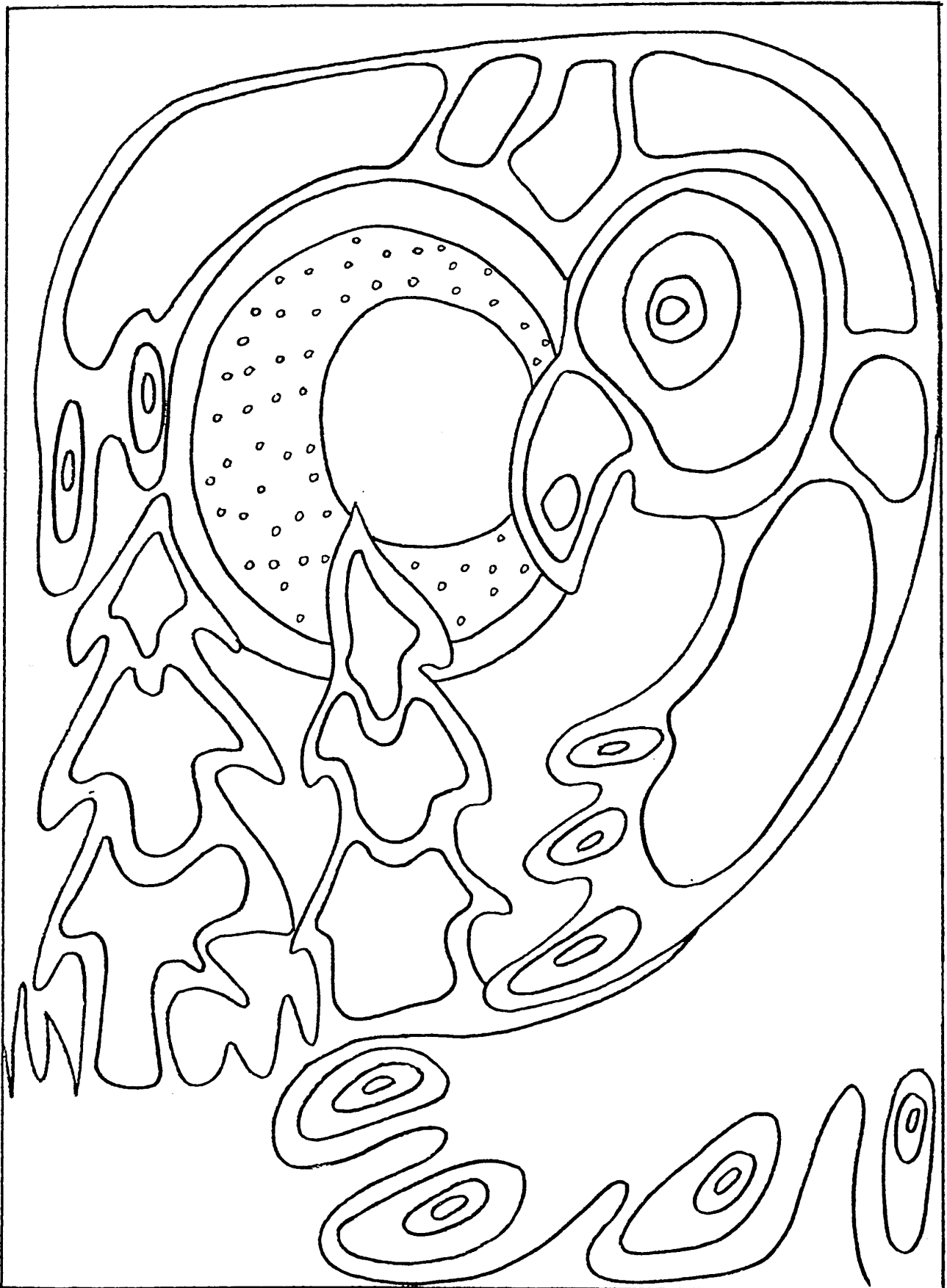
Reproduce this buffalo by copying each square onto the grid below.





Complete this picture by
drawing on the right side.

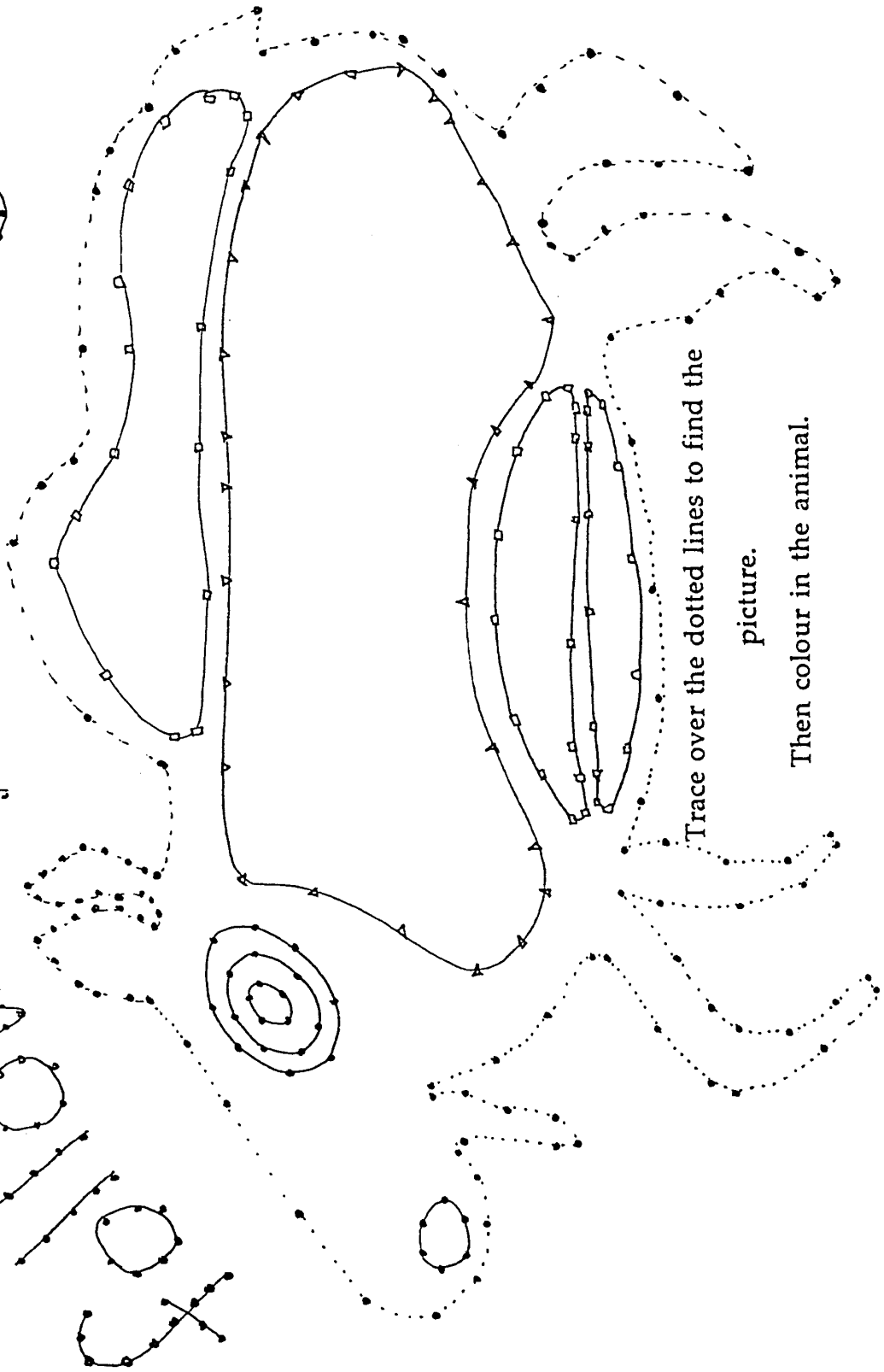




Colour this Woodlands style drawing.

the dots

how



Trace over the dotted lines to find the picture.

Then colour in the animal.

L H R R H E
 M - S U R H E
 N J T H J Z
 H G H

K D S
 L E T S
 M E U U
 H T D
 S R
 H S R

Fill in the missing letters to find the Cree names for some animals.

CAT

1.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| L | | N |
| H | | J |
| M | | O |
| Z | | P |
| R | | T |

BEAR

2.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L | | R | J | V | |
| | | | | | |
| N | B | T | L | X | B |
| O | C | | M | | C |

EAGLE

3.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | | B |
| S | | U |
| H | | J |
| L | | N |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| J | H | G | D | V |
| | | | | |
| L | J | I | F | X |

DOG

1. minôš, 2. maskwa, 3. atim, 4. kihew

COUNT



1. peyak



2. nîso



3. nîsto



4. newo



5. nîyânan



6. nîkotwâsik



7. tepakohp



8. ayinânew



9. kekâ-mitâtaht



10. mitâtaht



in Cree

Count the animal groups.

I'm Métis!

Tansi!
(TAHN seh!)

Salut! Comment ça va?

Hi! How are you?

Menanto. Kia?
(Muh NAHN do. KEE yuh?)

Ça va bien. Et vous?

I'm fine. And you?

Menanto. Nia otepemisiwak!

Bien. Je suis bois brûlé!

Good. I'm Métis!

Pisiskowak (Animals)

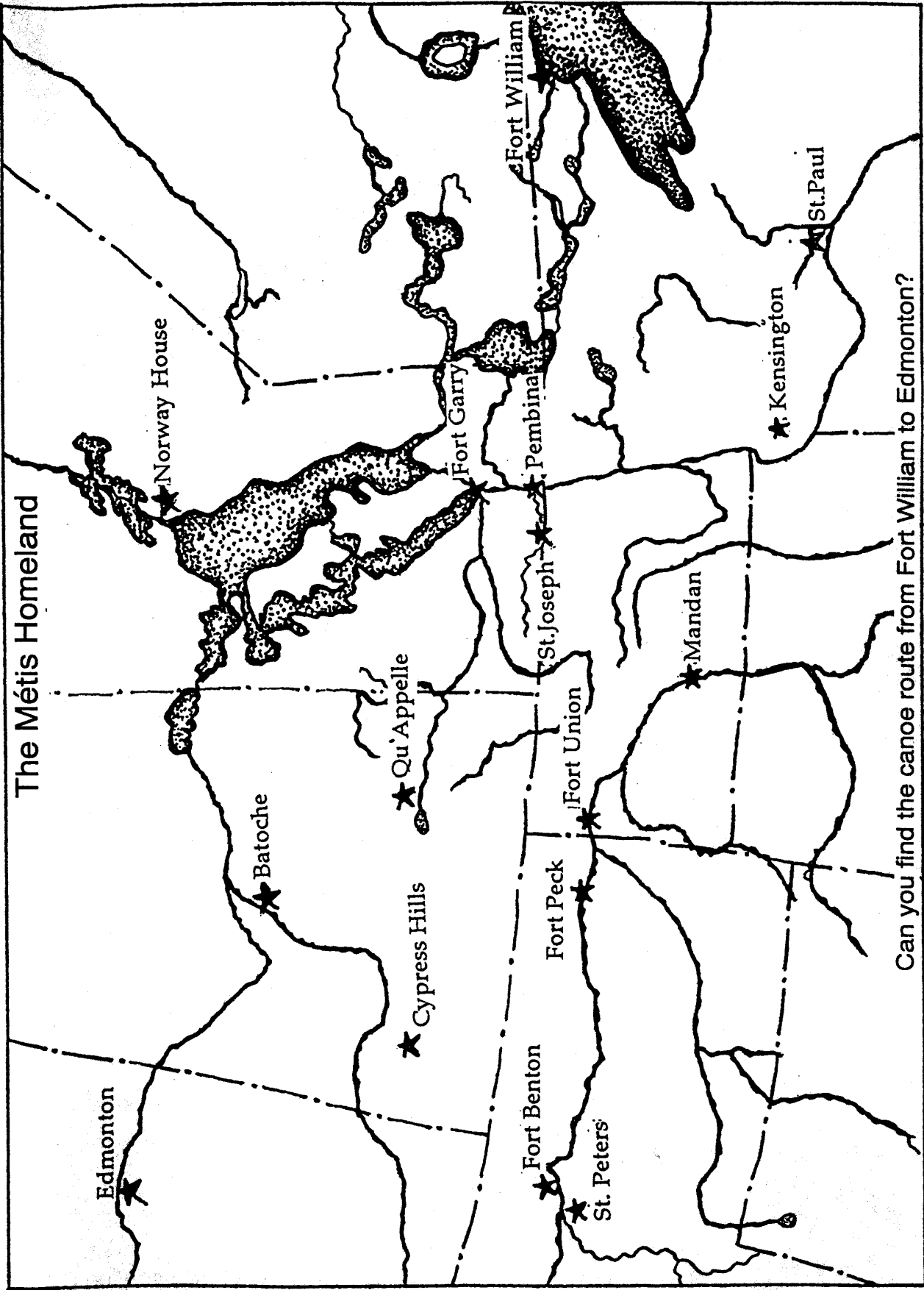
âhâsow crow
amisk beaver
anikwacas squirrel
apisimosos deer
atim dog
kakwa porcupine
kihew eagle

kinosew fish
maskwa bear
mahikan wolf
mahikanis coyote
minôš cat
mistatim horse
mostos cow

môšwa moose
niska goose
ôhô owl
pisiw cougar
šisîp duck
wâpos rabbit

Pîsimwak (Months)

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| January | kisepîsim | (cold moon) |
| February | mikisowipîsim | (eagle moon) |
| March | niskipîsim | (goose moon) |
| April | ayikipism | (frog moon) |
| May | sâkipakâwipîsim | (budding moon) |
| June | opâškâwehowipîsim | (egg-hatching moon) |
| July | opaskowipîsim | (molting moon) |
| August | ohpahowipîsim | (flying moon) |
| September | onôcihitowipîsim | (mating moon) |
| October | kaskatinowipîsim | (freezing moon) |
| November | iyikopiwipîsim | (frost moon) |
| December | pawahcakanasîš | (drift-clearing moon) |



The Métis Homeland

Can you find the canoe route from Fort William to Edmonton?

